

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SANAA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3179
USUN NEW YORK 058
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 70

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: YE, PFOR, US, UN

SUBJ: PRESIDENT IRYANI FORMS SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO
EXAMINE CHARGES AGAINST YAR AMBASSADOR TO US; REPLACE-
MENT OF YEMENI PERMREP IN NEW YORK AND AMBASSADOR IN
WASHINGTON.

1. WE RELIABLY INFORMED THAT YAR AMBASSADOR TO US,
YAHYA GEHMAN, HAS REFUSED TAKE LYING DOWN THE CHARGES
AGAINST HIM OF MISUSE OF OFFICIAL FUNDS. HE HAS CALLED
FOR AN OFFICIAL INQUIRY, AS HE PUTS IT, TO PROVE HIS
INNOCENCE AND VINDICATE HIS HONOR. IN A MOVE THAT AS
FAR AS WE ARE AWARE IS WITHOUT PRECEDENT IN YEMEN'S
RECENT HISTORY, PRESIDENT IRYANI HAS APPOINTED A SELECT
COMMITTEE TO HEAR THE EVIDENCE AGAINST GEHMAN AND HIS
OWN TESTIMONY. COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF THREE OF YARG'S
MOST SENIOR AND RESPECTED MINISTERS: MIN ECONOMY ASNAG,
MIN TREASURY JUNEID AND CENTRAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION
DIRECTOR ABDUL-KARIM AL-IRYANI.

2. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT COMMITTEE HEARINGS WILL BE HELP-
FUL TO GEHMAN. ACCORDING ASNAG, THE EVIDENCE AGAINST
HIM IS AIRTIGHT. HIS REMOVAL FROM WASHINGTON, ALTHOUGH
NOT NECESSARILY FROM YEMEN DIPLOMATIC SERVICE, APPEARS
INEVITABLE.

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3. WE HAVE ASKED OUR CONTACTS ABOUT POSSIBLE REPLACE-

MENTS FOR GEGHMAN IN NEW YORK AND FORMER YEMENI PERMREP
IN NEW YORK, AL-ATTAR. CURRENT EXPECTATION IS THAT THE
TWO JOBS WILL AGAIN BE AMALGAMATED. AHMAD BARAKAT,
YAR'S COMPETENT AMBASSADOR TO BONN, IS THE LEADING CANDI-
DATE TO FILL BOTH. WE ARE TOLD THERE IS POSSIBILITY,
HOWEVER, THAT IF CURRENT POLITICAL MANEUVERING IN SANAA
DOES NOT RESULT IN REINCLUSION OF YARG OF FORMER PRIMIN
MUHSIN AL-AYNI, HE MIGHT BE OFFERED NEW YORK/WASHINGTON AS
A BIGGER POLITICAL ARENA FOR PLAY OF HIS POLITICAL AMBI-
TIONS THAN HIS PRESENT JOB AS AMBASSADOR IN LONDON.

4. COMMENT: BARAKAT IS WELL AND FAVORABLY KNOWN TO
EMBASSY. HE IS BRITISH-EDUCATED ENGINEER WHO WAS MEMBER
FIRST YARG FORMED IN 1962. BARAKAT SERVED AS DIRECTOR
OF KUWAIT FUND IN YEMEN UNTIL 1966 WHEN HE WAS FORCED TO
FLEE YEMEN ON FOOT DUE TO HIS OPPOSITION OF EGYPTIAN-
DOMINATED YARG. HE THEN WORKED WITH KUWAIT FUND*IN GU F
UNDTIL OVERTHROW SALLAL GOVERNMENT BY MODERATES IN*LATE
1967. BARAKAT SERVED BRIEFLY AS FONMIN IN 1971 AND
SINCE JULY 1972 HAS BEEN AMBASSADOR TO BONN. HE
ENJOYS REPUTATION FOR COMPETENCE AND HONESTY AMONG HIS
MODERATE COLLEAGUES IN YARG.

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